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ABSTRACT

William Rainey Harper College (WRHC) in Illinois conducted a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a Weight Management Center (WMC) at the college to provide a comprehensive program of nutrition education, increased physical activity, behavior modification, and psychological support. An interest questionnaire and a description of the proposed WMC were mailed to a sample of 1,000 district households, 500 WRHC students, and 100 faculty and staff. Study findings, based on responses from 52 residents, 40 students, and 31 faculty/staff members, and the assumption that non-respondents were not interested in the program, included the following: (1) it was estimated that 3,700 persons in the district would enroll in the program over a 5-year period; (2) if four 10-week terms were offered each year, an average of about 186 would attend each term, allowing about six sections of 30 to be offered; (3) most respondents were interested in attending the WMC in the evening or on Saturday; and (4) respondents indicated that on the average they would be willing to spend 2.7 hours per week in the program. The survey instrument and descriptions of the proposed WMC and the currently existing Human Performance Laboratory are included. (MPH)

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William Rainey Harper College

Feasibility Study for Establishing a Weight Management Center at Harper College

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ABSTRACT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CENTER AT HARPER COLLEGE. A SURVEY INSTRUMENT WAS DESIGNED AND MAILED TO A SAMPLE OF 1,000 DISTRICT HOUSEHOLDS, A SAMPLE OF 500 STUDENTS AND A SAMPLE OF 100 FACULTY AND STAFF. AFTER MAKING A NUMBER OF ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS, IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 3,700 PERSONS IN THE DISTRICT WOULD ENROLL OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. IF FOUR TEN-WEEK TERMS WERE OFFERED EACH YEAR, AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 186 WOULD ATTEND EACH TERM. THIS WOULD ALLOW ABOUT SIX SECTIONS OF 30 TO BE OFFERED EACH TERM. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT MOST WERE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING IN THE EVENING OR ON SATURDAY. FURTHERMORE, PEOPLE INDICATED THAT ON THE AVERAGE THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO SPEND 2.7 HOURS PER WEEK IN THE PROGRAM.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of establishing a weight management center at Harper College. The level of interest was determined among residents of the district, the student body and the staff of Harper. The study was requested by Nicki Salmons of the Human Performance Laboratory.

Population Surveyed and Methodology

The survey population consisted of samples of 1,000 district households taken from the telephone book, 500 currently enrolled students and 100 Harper College staff and faculty. The survey instrument was jointly developed by the Human Performance Laboratory and the Office of Planning and Research. A copy is shown in the appendix, along with a description of the proposed program. After one mailing of the survey instrument and description of the program, the following response was attained.

	Residents		Students		Staff and Faculty	
Type of Response	N	PCT	N	PCT	N	PCT
Mail Response	52	5.2	40	8.0	31	31
Non-Forwardables	18	1.8	10	2.0	0	0
Moved out of State	24	2.4	1	.2	0	0
Moved out of District	18	1.8	0	0	0	0
No Response	888	88.8	449	89.8	69	69
Total Sample Size	1000	100	500	100	100	100

It may seem at first that less than a 10 percent response rate is very small but consider that only a small percent of the population is required to justify the establishment of a weight management center. For purposes of this study those not responding were considered to be not interested in the program.

Discussion of Results

There were three levels of interest reported in the program. First, there were those who said they were definitely interested and it was assumed if the program were offered, all would enroll some time in the next five years. Then there were those who said they were probably interested and it was assumed that half of these people would attend some time in the next five years. Finally, there were those who said that maybe they were interested but they needed more information and it was assumed 10 percent of them would attend some time in the next five years. Each sample represented a different proportion of their respective population. Among the district residents, 1,000 households were sampled from a total of 170,000 district-wide households. Therefore, the results of the survey of residents have to be multiplied by 170 (170,000÷1,000) to get the total interest districtwide. Likewise, the student sample was 500 from among 36,000 students attending Harper annually. Therefore, the results of the student survey have to be multiplied by 72 (36,000÷500) to get the total student interest

in a year. The staff sample was 100 from among 500 so the results of this survey had to be multiplied by 5 to generate the total interest among all staff members.

When trying to combine the survey results there is the problem that students and staff are also residents and simply adding up results would lead to duplication. Percentagewise students and staff are more interested in the weight management program than the public in general. In order to avoid duplication, a base interest level was determined for both staff and students based on the percent of the residents who were interested. Then only the excess beyond this base rate among students and staff were added to the residential survey. The final assumption made was that total interest would be spread over a five-year period. It was assumed that after five years a whole new set of interested persons would develop. Moreover, since the program was designed to run 8-12 weeks, we assumed an average time of ten weeks and that 4 ten-week terms would be scheduled each year. Therefore, the total interest would be spread out over 20 terms in a five-year period.

When all these considerations and assumptions were taken into account it was estimated that 3700 people would enroll at the weight management center over a five-year period. When spread out over a 20-term and 5-year period this would average 186 persons attending a session which would amount to an annualized FTE of 42. If it was desired to enroll about 30 persons per section, then six sections could be offered per term. One possible arrangement would be to offer one in early morning, one in the late afternoon, three in evening sessions, and one on Saturday. On the average, persons would like to meet about 2.7 hours per week. Almost everyone with an interest would be willing to attend a one-hour orientation program to learn more details about the program.

It should be noted that the interest generated among the sample in the survey was produced because of a letter to that household outlining the program in detail. Therefore, to generate the interest estimated in this report would take a similar effort among the entire population. This might mean a specific brochure or letter mailed to every household at least two times each year. Relying only on information in the semester schedule would surely not produce the enrollment desired.

DETAILED RESULTS

Survey of Interest in Weight Management

Determination of Interest

Resident Survey	Number In Sample		Probability Of Enrolling In 5-Year Period		Multiplier: Number in Population / Number Sampled		Expected Enrollment in 5-Year Period From Total Harper District
Definitely Interested	11	X	1.0	X	170,000 households / 1,000 households sampled = 170	=	1870
Probably Interested	12.5	X	.5	X	170	=	1062
Maybe Interested	14.5	X	.1	X	170	=	247
Total Residents Interested in 5-Year Period							3179
Ratio: Interested residents per total adult (18 and over) Resident Population					3179 / 342689	=	.009277

Student Survey							
Definitely Interested	2	X	1.0	X	36,000 annual Headcount / 500 Students Sampled = 72	=	144
Probably Interested	17	X	.5	X	72	=	612
Maybe Interested	10	X	.1	X	72	=	72
Total Students Interested in 5-Year Period							828
Expected interest among 36,000 students if interest rate was same as among residents					36,000 x .009277	=	-334
Excess student interest over expected resident interest						=	494

Staff and Faculty Survey							
Definitely Interested	4	X	1.0	X	500 Harper Staff / 100 Staff Sampled = 5	=	20
Probably Interested	14	X	.5	X	5	=	35
Maybe Interested	8	X	.1	X	5	=	4
Total Staff Interested in 5-Year Period							59
Expected Interest among 500 staff if interest rate was same as among residents					500 x .009277	=	- 5
Excess staff interest over expected resident interest						=	54

SUMMARY OF INTEREST AMONG ALL GROUPS

Groups	Number Interested Over a Five-Year Period
Residents	3179
Excess Student Interest Over Expected Resident Interest	494
Excess Staff Interest Over Expected Resident Interest	54
Total Interest	3727

Assume terms are ten weeks long and that four terms are used per year - also assume people will attend 2.7 hours per week for ten weeks - furthermore assume total interest be spread over a five-year period. In other words, after five years a whole new set of people would be interested.

Given this, 3724 persons interested would be spread out over 20 terms (5 years x 4 terms per year) so that on the average (3727 ÷ 20), 186 persons would attend the weight management center each term. If about 30 persons are desired per section, 6 sections could be offered each term with the possible following time distribution:

1 Early Morning

1 Late Afternoon

3 Evenings

1 Saturday

This would amount to an enrollment of 21.0 FTE per term and an annualized FTE of 41.9 FTE.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Interest in Attending One Hour Free Seminar Outlining Program in More Detail	.85365 Resident Survey N	PCT	.13265 Student Survey N	PCT	.01370 Staff Survey N	PCT	1.0000 Weighted Average PCT
Yes	37	97.4	21	72.4	26	100.0	94.1
No	0	0	4	13.8	0	0	1.8
Did not Answer among those with at least a possible interest	1	2.6	4	13.8	0	0	4.1
Total	38	100.0	29	100.0	26	100.0	100.0
Hours willing to Attend Per Week							
One	2	5.3	5	17.9	3	13.1	7.1
Two	14.5	38.2	12.5	44.6	7	30.4	38.9
Three	14.5	38.1	10	35.7	9.5	41.3	37.8
Four	3	7.9	.5	1.8	1.5	6.5	7.1
Five	4	10.5	0	0	2	8.7	9.1
Total	38	100.0	28	100.0	23	100.0	100.0
Average	2.8		2.2		2.7		2.7
Times Most Convenient to Attend							
Early Morning	7	18.4	3	10.7	8	32	17.6
Morning	12	31.6	8	28.6	6	24	31.1
Afternoon	6	15.8	4	14.3	8	32	15.8
Late Afternoon	7	18.4	1	3.6	13	52	16.9
Evening	27	71.1	20	71.4	9	36	70.7
Saturday	19	50.0	8	28.6	4	16	46.7
Item Respondents	38		28		25		

APPENDIX

William Rainey Harper College
Northwest Cardiac Rehabilitation Center
Building M
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, IL 60067

To The Harper Community:

Are you one of 40 million Americans making an effort to lose weight? If so, you should be congratulated, supported and encouraged. Currently William Rainey Harper College is in the process of establishing a Weight Management Center (WMC) to aid you in your quest for improved health and physical fitness.

This 8-12 week program will be administered by credentialed healthcare professionals at a reasonable cost. Participants will benefit from a comprehensive weight management program featuring:

- Individually tailored nutrition advice.
- Behavior modification techniques directed at assessing your habits, identifying problem areas and promoting positive lifelong changes.
- Invigorating and varied exercise programs conveniently offered in the College's modern fitness facility.
- Psychological support offered by caring staff and group members in an atmosphere of mutual sharing.
- Follow up care provided to ensure continued success.

Please complete the attached survey and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Nicki Salmons

Nicki Salmons, R.D.
Human Performance Laboratory

SURVEY OF INTEREST

IN

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

1- In reading over the enclosed description, would you enroll in the Weight Management Program? Mark (✓) one.

_____ A. Definitely
_____ B. Probably
_____ C. Maybe (I would have to think about it or talk first to someone who had been through the program.)
_____ D. No

If you are unsure about enrolling in the program, would you be willing to attend a free orientation, one-hour session at Harper College, outlining the program in more detail? Mark (✓) one.

_____ A. Yes
_____ B. No

2- If you think you might be interested in such a program, how many hours per week would you be willing to attend? Mark (✓) one.

_____ A. One
_____ B. Two
_____ C. Three
_____ D. Four
_____ E. Five

3- Also if you might be interested, what times are most convenient for you to attend? Mark (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Early morning
_____ B. Morning
_____ C. Afternoon
_____ D. Late afternoon
_____ E. Evening
_____ F. Saturday

4- Would you like to be on the mailing list if such a Weight Management Center were to be started at Harper? If so, list your name, address and telephone number below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Proposal to initiate a Weight Management Center: General Overview

Purpose

Sound nutrition and a sensible program of physical activity are two essential requirements for good health. Unfortunately, the typical lifestyle of most Americans is not conducive to good health as overeating and inactivity abound. An estimated 25 million Americans are considered obese. The penalties of obesity are great and include cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, gallbladder disease and certain cancers. Also, arthritis, gout and back disorders are more common among the obese because of the added burden that excess weight places on the musculoskeletal systems.

Currently, the Human Performance Laboratory at William Rainey Harper College serves individuals suffering from many of these chronic and degenerative diseases. The primary therapeutic intervention for these individuals has been exercise training with nutritional guidance being offered only as an adjunctive service. This needs to be corrected. Therefore a comprehensive Weight Management Center (WMC) on campus is proposed.

Focus

The WMC will be designed not only to assist in dietary management for weight control, but will include programs to meet the diverse nutritional needs of individuals throughout the lifecycle. The programs offered at the WMC will entail sound nutrition education, increased physical activity, behavior modification and psychological support. Evidence supporting this approach suggests that the combination of regular physical activity and an energy restricted diet is more effective in weight management than either diet or exercise alone. Also, behavior modification helps individuals identify and comprehend any maladaptive eating behaviors and/or underactivity and provides them with techniques to replace these behaviors with a lifestyle conducive to weight loss and good health.

Program Content

The WMC program will be administered by credentialed professionals utilizing:

- Educational sessions
- Motivational sessions and follow-up care
- Cooking demonstrations
- Camps (primarily for obese children)
- Invigorating and varied exercise programs

Target Populations

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Community Residents
- Corporate Groups
- Municipal Employees (firefighters, etc.)

Potential Interaction with Existing Programs

Students in several career programs could gain by participating as assistants in offerings of the WMC. These include the Cardiac Exercise Technology, Child Development, Dental Hygiene, Dietetic Technician and Nursing programs.

The WMC could also serve as a resource for existing service programs. For example:

1- Health Care Program: Serving as a nutrition referral source for community health care agencies and providers and providing counseling for individuals with prescribed therapeutic diets.

2- Northwest Cardiac Rehabilitation Center (NCRC)

3- Physical Education Program: Topics to include "Nutrition and Physical Fitness" and "Nutrition and Athletic Performance" for coaches and participants.

4- Senior Citizens Program: "Nutrition and the Golden Years."

5- Women's Program: Possible topics "Special Nutrient Needs for Women" (PMS, Osteoporosis): "Packing more Nutrition into your family's diet" (tips for shopping, cooking and serving healthful food): Lamaze Method of Childbirth, "Building better babies with good nutrition."

Advantages of a Weight Management Center at Harper College

William Rainey Harper College is an ideal setting for a WMC for several reasons:

- As a non-profit organization, nutritional services as well as other health promotiong programs can be offered at a reasonable cost to the participants.
- The College's reputation for providing reliable information by credentialed health care professionals.
- Nutritional services will enhance other offerings by providing a more comprehensive approach to health management.
- Convenience -- Participants will be able to effectively incorporate health improvement activities with on-site fitness and nutrition programs.
- Large number of people serviced by the College including students, staff, faculty, residential community.

Society places a high priority on health and physical fitness. In order to achieve either state, proper nutritional practices must be applied. Unfortunately, no other discipline in the health field is more plagued by misinformation than the area of nutrition. Therefore, the time is now for Harper College to establish an "identity" in the nutrition field. The proposed Weight Management Center will effectively meet the demands and needs of the public by offering reliable nutrition information.

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